



APRIL 2003

YOUR FRONT COUNTER ----- THE NEXT "MISSION" TO BE ADDRESSED

The best Shop owners from Coast to Coast have been trying to "shore-up" the back end of their shop with the best talent they can find. They ensure that their technicians are properly trained and have instant access to the information they need to perform their work professionally, and in a timely manner. It is a fact that if a shop does not have competency in the back, the business will eventually fail in today's high-tech, diagnostic and maintenance world, or, these shops will buy themselves a job, only working on old beat up relics left in the marketplace, until they finally get out of the business.

That being acknowledged by progressive shop owners, it is time to address another very important area that can also make or break a business today, namely, the front counter person. In many successful shops, the owner is up front, or "floating" around the business, ensuring business efficiencies are maximized throughout the day, and/or networking with clients, and/or looking after other business tasks. In many cases, these shops also have assistance with another full time counter person. It is this individual who usually has first contact with every client. It is this individual who sets the "image" of the shop in terms of making the client feel comfortable with the business environment they have entered. It is this individual who ensures the client feels that they are dealing with a "competent business" that understands his or her needs.

It is this person who requires special training today.

There are many shop owners in the marketplace who seem to think that they require a "sales" person on the front counter who "closes the sale" and increases "car count" in the back. With all do respect that is old thinking. Today, counter people are aware of "selling"; they know "how to sell".

The most successful counter people in our industry today are at a higher level in their personal skill than the average counter person out there. They have been fully trained on other issues. They clearly understand the business side of the shop in terms of gross profit management, revenue mix management, maximizing shop efficiency, invoice productivity and profit measurement, expense management, coupled with the important issue of building on-going professional business relationships with the shops chosen clientele. They have been fully trained on shop Business Management. It was through this training process that these counter people now understand the business processes required to maximize shop profitability through "counseling" the client on the maintenance needs of their vehicle, as well as educating the client on the "value" the shop delivers to them. These counter people are true professionals within our industry today, and the shops bottom line proves it. They must continue to be fully recognized for the skill level and business value they bring to the table, and as a side note, they are always a pleasure to work with. Consider taking the time now that is required to review exactly what type of training you have given to your front counter people, and what on-going mechanisms you provide to ensure your front counter people have the in-house resources they need to maximize their potential.

Visit us at www.ekw.ca and explore.

Try the FREE 24 Hour Test Drive at www.aaec.ca!

Sign up to participate in the June 2003 Statistical Survey Today!!! www.ekw.ca and click on Ontario

Copyright E. K. Williams & Co. (Ontario) Ltd. 2003